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Guide-Posts on the Foot-Path

to Peace.

by EVELYN GAGE KNIFFIN



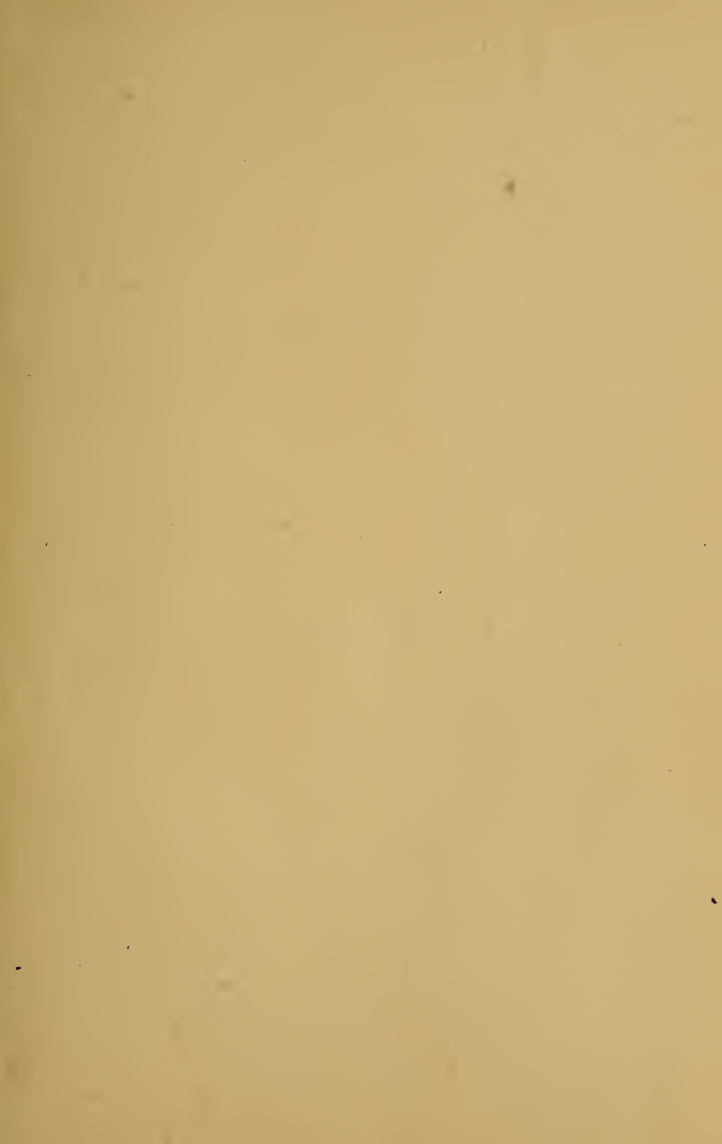


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EVELYN GAGE KNIFFIN

GUIDE-POSTS ON THE FOOT-PATH TO PEACE

A Book of Religious Verse

By EVELYN GAGE KNIFFIN

Author of "Rose Leaves"

"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."—Isaiah 30:21.

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Published by the Author
130 Milton Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

1910

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INSCRIPTION

TO MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS
OF EVERY RACE AND CREED
WHO ARE SEEKING PEACE I
MOST LOVINGLY DEDICATE THIS
LITTLE VOLUME, WITH THE
EARNEST PRAYER THAT SOME
ONE OF THESE SIMPLE GUIDE-
POSTS MAY AID THE LONGING
HEART TO REACH THE GOAL.

"The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace."—Isaiah 59: 8.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee."—Isaiah 26: 3.

"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."—Rom. 8: 6.

"The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace."—Psa. 29: 11.

"To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."—Luke 1: 79.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."—John 14: 27.

"For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree."—Isaiah 55: 12-13.

"And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4: 7.

FOREWORD

TO-DAY we are standing just within the gates of a new and glorified existence which, though open to all, is unobserved by the many who through a false sense of materialism are blinded to the possibilities within their reach.

For centuries men have been vainly striving to attain the sublime ; but, seeking it by the wrong pathway, have failed to rise above the cares and sorrows of earth which have ever overwhelmed them. Now, however, more and more are we coming to realize that the simple turning from material conceptions to the spiritual,—the changing of our erroneous belief in God as the author of sin and sorrow, to the understanding of God as Love,—is the open-sesame which reveals to our enraptured vision the glories of the new life. And as we progress the Light grows ever brighter and brighter ; and once on the journey, how far behind seems the little valley of darkness where for so long we wandered.

To all those who are seeking Peace, vainly striving to find the way thither, these little thought-verses are offered,—guide-posts, as it were, pointing the way onward; for this journey is not made at a single bound, but step by step we every one must tread the pathway ere the land of fulfilment is ours.

Speaking in an unknown tongue is of no avail in the endeavor to bring understanding; so in plain, simple language I have striven to make the way clear, sometimes even using the idioms of the old life that I may be the more readily understood, and thereby accomplish the greater good. And to each troubled wanderer I would extend the loving, sympathetic hand, and very gently turn their faces Peaceward, lifting the veil of materiality tenderly, lest, blinded by a too sudden radiance, some may flee in terror and be plunged into even deeper darkness by the belief that where light was promised they had found nothing.

For those already in the way of Understanding there are guide-posts many, but for these weary hearts there seem to be only the waymarks which lead them farther and farther into the vale of unsatisfied longing. And to me, therefore, it will be a most gracious and blessed privilege if, by these simple verses, I may go out to meet a few of these

seeking ones and be instrumental in starting them just a little way on the foot-path to Peace, where they will find the one true Guide—eternal, divine Love.

Ovelyn Gage Kniffin.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
GUIDE-POSTS TO PEACE	1
BETHESDA	3
HOPE	5
GUIDANCE	6
SUFFICING STRENGTH	8
DELIVERANCE	10
REFUGE	13
PEACE	15
SHEPHERDED	16
HE GIVETH HIS BELOVED SLEEP	17
THE NEW DAY	18
MY OWN WILL COME TO ME	19
COMPASSION	21
LOVE	23
THROUGH LOVE TO TRUST	25
TRUSTING	26
NO WILL BUT HIS	28
THY WILL BE DONE	29
THE PASSING SEA	31
THE RIVER OF TEARS	33
THE EMPTY TOMB	34
AWAKENING	36
UNDERSTANDING	37

CONTENTS

	PAGE
HEAVEN	41
THANKSGIVING	42
WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME	44
MY PRAYER	47
MY DUTY	49
MY GOAL	51
THE CYCLE	52
EBB-TIDE	55
THE OTHER ROOM	56
PROGRESSION	57
FULFILMENT	59
COMPENSATIONS	61
HEROISM	62
PATIENCE	64
RECTIFICATION	65
CASTAWAYS	67
THOUGHTS	68
A SONG OF JOY	70
MY CASTLE	73
THE MOUNTAINS OF PEACE	75
BENEATH THE LEAVES	77
THE LAND OF TRUE SUCCESS	79
THE VALE OF SEEMING	81
UNANSWERED	84
THE RIVER OF LIFE	86

GUIDE-POSTS TO PEACE

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."—Ps. 119: 105.

SEEKING Peace, I wandered, blind and lonely,
Through a mist-enshrouded vale of tears;
Searching for the path that leadeth onward
To the land beyond earth's cares and fears.

Then at last the purple fog seemed lifted,
And a guide-post through the darkness shone:—
"I will bring the blind by ways they know not,
Leading them in paths they have not known:

"I will make the darkness light before them,
Crooked things shall straightened be for aye."
Then I saw a pathway straight and narrow;
For the night had flown, and lo, 'twas day.

Through a meadow green it led me onward,
Where fair blossoms shed their perfume sweet;
But at last the way grew rough and stony,
Rocks of fear were strewn beneath my feet.

“Fear not, I am with thee and will bless thee.”

Soon my rugged path had smother grown:—
“He will give His angels charge to keep thee,
Lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

Yet the way seemed long and weakness seized me,
And I stumbled oft, to fall at length:—
“Trust ye in the Lord your God forever,
In the Lord is everlasting strength.”

Then I passed through waters deep of sorrow;
Yet there stood above the flood of woe,—
“When thou passest through the waves I’m with
thee;
And through rivers, they shall not o’erflow.”

“All the ransomed shall return with gladness,
Care and sorrow far away shall flee.”
“God shall wipe away tears from all faces,”
“With His feathers He shall cover thee.”

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you.”
Thus the guide-posts lead me day by day:—
Guidance, Light, and Trust, and Strength, and
Refuge;—
Till the Land of Peace is mine for aye.

BETHESDA

“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”—2 Cor. 6: 2.

Dost thou wait beside Bethesda's pool,
Heavy laden, sick, and worn with care?
When its waters by the angel moved,
Wert thou not among the blessed there?
Hast thou waited many lingering years,
From each weary dawn till close of day?
Know ye, then,—thy vigil now is o'er!
Christ, the blessed Master, comes this way!

No more needst thou wait the angel's spell,
No more needst thou watch with longing eyes!
Truth entreats thee, “Wilt thou not be whole?”
Christ is here to say to thee, “Arise!”
Banish all thy fettering doubts and fears,
Smooth the lines of suffering from thy brow;
Wait no longer till the waters move,
Know that God's accepted time is now.

See thyself the perfect child of God!

Rise above the earth-clouds dark and drear!
Then the light of Love for thee shall dawn,

Pain and care, like mists, shall disappear.
Stretch thine hand and take the offered gift,—

God hath waited long to give it thee:
From thy dreams of sin and sickness, wake!

Know the Truth, and be forever free!

HOPE

“For we are saved by hope.”—Romans 8: 24.

OH, star of Hope! Thou beacon of my heart,
That ever brightly shines, though dark the
way,—

Thou art the flaming torch upheld by Faith,
That steadfast glows and leads me on for aye.

The star of Bethlehem, in days gone by,
Burned in the eastern sky at close of day;
And, brightly shining, led the wise men on
To where the babe, the little Christ-child, lay.

So thou, O star of Hope, dost ever lead
All those who seek surcease from sin and pain,
To that blest place where Truth sublime is
born,—
Where Love, and Love alone, doth ever reign.

GUIDANCE

“To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”—Luke 1:79.

“THE meek will He guide in judgment;
And the meek will He teach His way”—
By night, with the pillar of fire,
With the hovering cloud by day.

The Lord doth continually guide us
O'er places that perilous seem;
He makes us to lie in green pastures;
He leads us beside the still stream.

This path, Jesus travelled before us;
Its terrors no longer dismay;—
His Word is a lamp to our footsteps,
A light to illumine our way.

The pitfalls that seemed to surround us,
As weakly we groped in our fear,
Have vanished! and lo, in the sunlight,
The angel of Peace doth appear!

The mountains which seemed steep and toilsome
To feet that were weary and sore,
By Faith, are removed from our pathway;
Bright meadows lie gleaming before.

We knew not the way Thou wert leading,
And blindly refused, Lord, to see
That sickness, and sorrow, and dying,
Could ne'er have been fashioned by Thee.

Forgive us for doubting Thy goodness,
For closing our eyes 'gainst the Light,
Believing that Thou who dost love us,
Shouldst leave us in bondage of night.

For lo, when we know, Lord, that evil
Exists not by Thee, nor to Thee,
Our pathway is flooded with glory;
Whereas we were blind, now we see.

With Love, and in Truth, Thou dost guide us;
Thy tenderness never doth cease;
And we shall go out with much singing,
Yea, we shall be led forth with Peace.

SUFFICING STRENGTH

“And as thy days, so shall thy strength be.”—Deut.
32 : 25.

YE who climb life's rugged way,
Hear the voice of Jesus say,—
“Fear not : peace be unto thee!”
As thy days, thy strength shall be.

Sow in tears, but reap in joy!
Let not care thy hope destroy!
Patience brings thee victory;—
As thy days, thy strength shall be.

Put all doubt and fear away!
Rise in all His might to-day!
Evil has no power o'er thee;—
As thy days, thy strength shall be.

Everlasting strength is thine,
For its source is Love Divine.
Child of God, thy birthright see!—
As thy days, thy strength shall be.

Truth is victor ! Mind is might !
Weakness flees before the Light ;
From its thralldom thou art free !—
As thy days, thy strength shall be.

In the strength of God, arise !
For, where'er thy pathway lies,—
On the mount, by surging sea ;—
As thy days, thy strength shall be.

DELIVERANCE

“The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.”—Ps. 34: 17.

WHY art thou cast down, O my spirit?

Whence comes this disquiet within?

(Ps. 42: 11.)

Lo, there shall no evil befall thee;

(Ps. 91: 10.)

The peace that is perfect shall win.

(Isa. 26:3.)

The Lord will not leave thee nor fail thee;

So fear not, nor be thou dismayed!

(Deut. 31: 8.)

The Lord is thy light, thy salvation;

Of whom then shalt thou be afraid?

(Ps. 27: 1.)

He saith:—When through deep waters passing,

I'm with thee,—they shall not o'erflow:

(Isa. 43: 2.)

I'll strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee;

(Isa. 41: 10.)

No sorrow thy spirit shall know.

(Rev. 21: 4.)

Fear not for the terror by midnight,

Nor arrow that flieth by day;
(Ps. 91: 5.)

For naught shall by any means hurt thee;
(Luke 10: 19.)

Thy joy no man taketh away.
(John 16: 22.)

No plague shall e'er come nigh thy dwelling,
(Ps. 91: 10.)

Then why shouldst thou tremble and fear?
(Matt. 8: 26.)

For I am the Lord that shall heal thee;
(Ex. 15: 26.)

Before thou shalt call, I will hear.
(Isa. 65: 24.)

I'll turn all thy darkness to daylight,

Thy crooked ways straightened shall be,
(Isa. 42: 16.)

And thou shalt forever be singing,—
(Isa. 65: 14.)

“Whereas I was blind, now I see!”
(John 9: 25.)

When running, thou shalt not be weary,

Or walking, thou never shalt fall;
(Isa. 40: 31.)

The flame shall not kindle upon thee,
(Isa. 43: 2.)

And nothing shall hurt thee at all.
(Luke 10: 19.)

E'en death shall have no more dominion,
(Rom. 6:9.)
For Jesus proclaims it, and saith:—

A man that shall keep all my sayings,
Shall live, and shall never see death;
(John 8:51.)

For he that believeth upon me,
Is passed now from death unto life.
(John 5:24.)
The grave has been robbed of its victory,—
(1 Cor. 15:55.)
O'ercome in the last mighty strife!

So fear not; for lo, I am with thee!
Thy God I am! Be not dismayed!
(Isa. 41:10.)
Thou art not in flesh, but in Spirit;
(Rom. 8:9.)
And none shall e'er make thee afraid!
(Job 11:19.)

REFUGE

“The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”—Deut. 33: 27.

WHEN darkness gathers round my way,
And clouds obscure the sun,
“Let there be light!” I hear Him say,
And lo, the morn has come:
His Word dispels the shades of night,
And this my refuge,—God is Light!

When tempests roar, and sorrows thrill,
While anguish-billows beat,
I hear a whisper, “Peace, be still!”
And find a haven sweet;
Then calmed are angry waves of strife:
Lo, this my refuge,—God is Life!

When o'er parched sands my path is laid,
Through trial's fervid heat,
A great rock stands, in whose cool shade
I find a blest retreat;
And sheltered in His Fatherhood,
Behold my refuge,—God is Good!

When fear o'erwhelming terror brings,
I seek His loving breast,
And underneath His shielding wings,
In Love I gently rest;
Then peace descendeth like a dove:
My sweetest refuge,—God is Love!

PEACE

“And he arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.”—Mark 4: 39.

HARK! the Master gently whispers,

“Peace, be still!”

And the angry waves and tempests

Do His will.

Through the storm-clouds stars are peeping,

Billows once so madly leaping,

In a tranquil calm are sleeping:—

All is still!

Through the storms of life He speaketh

As of yore;

Saying, “Peace, be still: thy troubles

Are no more!”

Then our sorrows,—real though seeming,—

Vanish, and we wake from dreaming,

To behold the Day-star gleaming:—

Night is o’er!

SHEPHERDED

“Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”—Ps. 121: 4.

FEAR not! though dark thy pathway lies,
Behind the clouds are azure skies;
And angels watch, and guide thy feet
By waters still, through meadows sweet;
For, lo, the Shepherd guards His sheep,
And doth not slumber, neither sleep.

And when the weary day is done,
And gath'ring clouds shut out the sun,
While lowering bends a starless sky,
And nameless fears come creeping nigh,
Lie down in peace,—thy slumber take;—
The God who loves thee is awake!

HE GIVETH HIS BELOVED SLEEP

“When thou liest down thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down and thy sleep shall be sweet.”—Prov. 3: 24.

“HE giveth His beloved sleep;”
Then toss no more, and cease to weep!
Rest thou in peace from all thy care,
For God is Love, and everywhere.

“Come unto Me, I’ll give thee rest:”
A calm most sweet now fills thy breast,
And gone is every thought of fear,—
For God is Love, and watches near.

Then sleep: for God is All-in-all!
He knows thy need, He heeds thy call.
Thy turmoil is a dream of mist:
God made it not,—it don’t exist!

Sweet be thy slumber,—’tis His will:
He whispers softly, “Peace, be still!”
So close thine eyes, and cease to weep,—
“He giveth His beloved sleep.”

THE NEW DAY

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."—Isa. 9:2.

How beauteous the morning land,
The flying mists of night disclose:
The darkness seemed to reign supreme,
Until the sun, in might, arose.

And so our lives, by senses held
In bondage dark as deepest night,
Are freed from evil's seeming reign,
When Truth declares, "Let there be Light!"

For as the mists of earth arise,
When shines the glorious morning sun;
So shall the mists of error flee,
When Truth proclaims its victory won.

MY OWN WILL COME TO ME

“Thine they were, and thou gavest them me.”—John
17:6.

As the blossom turns to the sunlight,
As the waves roll back to the sea,
Some time,—just when I know not,—
My own will come to me.

Perhaps in the rosy morning,
Or the blaze of noonday sun,
Or while the stars of evening
Are gathering one by one.

By sunlight, twilight, starlight,—
Whenever, Lord, it be,—
May Thy Light be the beacon
That guides my own to me.

“All mine are Thine, and Thine are
mine;”
And when this truth I see,
Love will dispel the shadows
That hide my own from me.

Though often, Lord, I murmur,
And wonder when 'twill be,
Still this I know,—that some time,
My own must come to me.

Then make and keep me patient,
And give me grace to see
My own in all Thy beauty,
When they come seeking me.

It matters not how lowly,
How sorrowful they be ;
I'll see but Thy reflection,
When my own come to me.

Somewhere I know they're waiting,—
These whom Thou givest me ;—
So banish selfish thoughts, Lord,—
My own have need of me.

Keep Thou me pure and holy,
And faithful unto Thee,
And ever watching, waiting,—
When my own come to me.

COMPASSION

"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them."—Isa. 63: 9.

By the grave at Bethany,
Where the sisters vigil kept,
Touched by Mary's bitter woe,
In compassion, Jesus wept.

Yet, methinks, He also wept,
That they so misunderstood
How He conquered even death,
By the Truth that God is Good.

Conscious of His mighty power,
Knowing death was nought but sleep,
Still He proved to those who mourn,
That He weeps with those who weep:

Yet fulfills the prophet's word:—
Beauty is for ashes given,
Oil of joy for mourners' tears,
Heavy hearts shall sing to Heaven.

So when mortals, sorrow-bowed,
Weep by graves of those who've slept;
Have compassion with their tears,
And remember,—“Jesus wept.”

And through knowledge of God's might,
Guide them to the perfect way,
Where their grief shall turn to joy,
And all tears be wiped away.

LOVE

“Lovest thou me?” . . . “Feed my sheep.”—John
21 : 17.

ONCE I prayed for Love to draw me
Nearer Thee ;
Then I heard Thy gentle whisper,—
“Lov’st thou me?”
“Feed my lambs!” came Thy command, and
Now I see
That through Love I give to others,
I reach Thee.

Lord, I hear Thy mandate,—help me
To obey ;
Grant me grace to feed Thy hungry
Sheep, I pray :
Lead my feet in paths of service,
Lest I stray ;
Keep my heart with Love o’erflowing,
Day by day.

May I lift the fallen wand'rer,
 Bless the weak,
Guiding to the Light Eternal,
 All who seek;
And through days of loving labor,
 Keep me meek,
Doing all for Thee, who bade me,—
 “Feed my sheep!”

Thus in seeking Love, I gain when
 Most I spend:
Help me, Lord, to make each needy
 Heart my friend;
And the kindly word and helping
 Hand I lend,
Will uplift me to Thy Love that
 Hath no end.

THROUGH LOVE TO TRUST

“Perfect love casteth out fear.”—I John 4: 18.

O LORD, I pray for perfect love
That casts out fear,
That I may know, where'er my path,
Thou, Lord, art near;
A love which trusteth all to Thee,
And doubteth not,
But knows Thy gracious plan is best,
Whate'er my lot.

I love Thee, Lord,—but not enough;
And plead I must
That by Thy grace Thou'lt lead me on
Through Love to Trust:
And then I'll find, though dark the way,
That Light is given;
And reach the Trust which crowneth Love,
And leads to Heaven.

TRUSTING

“Except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”—Matt. 18: 3.

DOWN life's ever-winding river,
Float I, in a dream;
Shade and sunshine changing ever
On its shifting scene.
Sailing onward, never fearing,
For a loving hand is steering,
And the City fair is nearing,
Where Love reigns supreme.

Shadows dark are all about me,
Yet I feel no fear,—
For a shadow ne'er can harm me;
So I'm drifting here,
Ever trusting, ever knowing
That the river's seaward flowing,
Guides me whither I am going,—
To that City dear.

And when boisterous waves and tempests
 Menace me with ill,
Then my Pilot calms their fury,
 Saying, "Peace, be still!"
So I float on, sweetly dreaming,
Knowing that the stars are gleaming,
And the tempests, dreadful seeming,
 Shall obey His will.

NO WILL BUT HIS

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”—Rev. 19:6.

ADOWN the ages rings the blest command,—

“Be perfect, even as thy Father is!”

No power exists apart from Love Divine!

Behold the blessed truth,—

No will but His!

Omnipotent He reigns, the God of Love!

The uttermost of earth, His kingdom is;

So in His strength arise, and conquer fear!

On earth, e'en as in Heaven,

No will but His!

THY WILL BE DONE

“And be not conformed to this world : but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—Rom. 12: 2.

“NOT my will, Lord, but Thine be done,”
Through poignant tears we say;
And knowing not His will is Love,
We tread the thorny way.

We close our eyes lest we may see
The brightness of His sun,
And as we walk in darkest night,
We say, “Thy will be done.”

We close our ears lest we may hear
The truth taught by His Word,
Then say, “We cannot understand”;—
For lo, we have not heard.

We take His gift, Eternal Life,
And cast it far away;
Then, weeping o’er our bitter loss,
“It is God’s will,” we say.

So not His will, but ours is done
When darkness doth prevail;
For God is Light, and God is Love,
And Love will never fail.

Oh, may we strive to understand
That Good alone is given;
Then say, "Thy will, O Lord, be done
On earth, e'en as in Heaven."

THE PASSING SEA

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.”—Rev. 21: 1.

THE waves of the turbulent ocean
Roll on with their ceaseless refrain,
And speak to my heart of sad partings,
Of perils, and unrest, and pain;

Of long separation from loved ones,—
A hand clasp, a tearful good-bye;—
Of depths that are vast and unmeasured,
Of tempests with waves dashing high.

The sea ever voices its burden
Of restlessness, tumult, and strife,
And mysteries deep and unfathomed
That darken the pathway of life.

And sadly it murmurs of sorrow,
Drear watching, and agonized fears,
And ships that have vanished forever,
And heart-broken women in tears.

So lives in the thrall of the senses
Are like the tumultuous sea,
With partings, and peril, and discord,
Keen anguish, and dark mystery.

But Christ comes proclaiming our birthright,
Possession, and safety, and peace,
Great joy, and a full understanding ;—
And then all our turmoil shall cease.

There shall be no more death, neither sorrow,
Nor crying, nor any more pain ;
For God wipes away all our tear-drops,
And Love shall forevermore reign.

Behold, the new earth and new heaven !
The first heaven and earth cease to be !
The spirit of Peace reigns triumphant !
And lo, there shall be no more sea !

THE RIVER OF TEARS

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”
—Rev. 21:4.

THE River of Tears is a phantom stream,
That is fed by the Springs of Woe;
It flows through the Valley of Broken Hearts,
Where the Weeds of Sorrow grow.

Its waters are bitter with Human Cares,
Wrecked Hopes by its waves are tossed;
But it onward flows to the Sea of Love,
Where the River of Tears is lost.

Then the Sun of Truth with its rays of Joy,
Breaks through the clouded sky,
And shineth down on the Springs of Woe,
Till the River of Tears is dry.

THE EMPTY TOMB

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”—
1 Cor. 15: 26.

“WHY weapest thou? whom seekest thou?”

The Master gently said.

“Why seek ye for the living Christ
Among the silent dead?

Ye seek for Life,—why seek ye here?

The grave is not the door;

I conquered death that ye might know,—

And live forevermore.

Then cease to weep,—to seek me here,”

Methinks I hear Him say;

“The way to Life lies not through death:

Behold! I’m ris’n to-day.”

“Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?”

I hear Him ask it still:

And some of us, with Mary, cry,—

“He died on Calvary’s hill.”

But lo, He’s ris’n! He lives indeed!

And points the way for thee:

Oh death, where is thine anguish now?

Oh grave,—thy victory?

He swept all finite barriers down,

Broke every bond of sense,

And stepped out from His rock-hewn tomb,

Clothed with onnipotence.

“Why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?”

Down through the ages ring.

Where, empty grave, thy victory?

Where, vanquished death, thy sting?

Then weep no more, and seek no more

For Life within the tomb;

There is no death! He’s proven it:

The grave has met its doom.

So may the blessed truth sweep on

Through every age and clime,

That death itself is swallowed up

In victory sublime!

AWAKENING

"Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."—Eph. 5: 14.

WE sleep and dream of woe and pain,
And tremble in our fear;
Then wake to smile at phantoms flown,
For lo, the morn is here!

A sleep,—a dream of earthly life,
Of pain and grief God-given:
The Morn of Understanding dawns;
We wake,—and lo, 'tis Heaven!

UNDERSTANDING

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”—John 8:32.

When o'er my darkened night the
dawn comes stealing,
With sweetly whispered promise
of the day,
'Twill fuller, higher beauties
keep revealing,
Till shadows fade away.

And then the Light that shineth
on forever,
Will o'er my life in radiant
splendor stream,
And phantoms of the dark shall
fright me never,—
For Love shall reign supreme.

The buds that now seem blighted
ere unfolding,
Will burst to perfect beauty in
my hand :
I know not yet the gracious gift
I'm holding,—
But then I'll understand.

My tears that in deep sorrow
now are falling,
Will turn to songs of joy, and
hymns of praise ;
While through the air I'll hear
sweet voices calling
My feet to brighter ways.

And then I'll find that, in my
fleshly blindness,
Created I myself a God
above,
And made Him Lord of hate as
well as kindness ;—
But then I'll know Him, Love.

And walking in the footsteps
of the Master,
I'll learn of Him, and clearly
understand
That naught of darkness, evil,
or disaster,
Came from God's loving hand.

Then I shall know why prayers
were unavailing
That in my bitter anguish oft
I'd plead,
Entreating God to change, when
trust was failing,
And faith was all my need.

The cross that weighs me down
in woe and sorrow,
Shall be a crown of Life to
deck my brow ;
And I shall dream not of a far
to-morrow,
But know my Heaven is now.

And so I pray for Light that I
 may waken
From out my long and troubled
 sleep of fear;
That all my earthly dreams shall
 be forsaken,
And Spirit's Day be here.

And when at last my night
 has reached its ending,
I'll sing the Spirit's
 Resurrection Song,
And find within my Dawn of
 Understanding,
The Day for which I long.

HEAVEN

"Neither shall they say, lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."—Luke 17: 21.

HEAVEN is no distant walled abode,
Reached with our closing breath;
We enter through the gate of Life,
And not the gate of death:
'Tis where God is and sheds His care,—
And God is with us everywhere.

He dwelleth not above the stars,
In regions far apart;
Heaven is not won by change of place,
But by a change of heart.
We press not toward a distant goal,—
The gates of Heaven are in the soul.

THANKSGIVING

“If thou knewest the gift of God . . . thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”—John 4: 10.

LIKE one who spurns the priceless gem,
And for a pebble small
And almost worthless offers thanks,—
We thank Thee, Lord of All.

We thank Thee for the gifts we take,—
But oh, the gifts we slight
Are far more precious, and we pray
For grace to choose aright.

Thy blessings wait us every day,
Thy love our constant dower ;
And yet we spurn Thy bounty, Lord,
In every passing hour.

With longing hearts, we pray and plead
For mercies just at hand,
And starve in reach of plenty's store,—
Yet fail to understand.

If we but knew Thy gracious gift
Of sonship,—heirs are we,—
Our thirsting souls would overflow
With living waters free.

Thus give we thanks for but a part
Of all that shall be ours,
Until Thy buds of promise burst
To wondrous wealth of flowers.

And then at last, when fully clothed
In Spirit's garments white,
We'll take the gifts Thou offerest now,
And thank Thee, Lord, aright.

WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO ME

“And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.”—John 1:5.

Not receiving, and not giving,
But a spur to higher living;
For the mem’ry of the Christ-child ever bids me
 pause, and see
That the life He came to show me
Is not mine,—to those who know me,—
For I follow not His footsteps:—that’s what
 Christmas means to me.

And through all my seeming gladness
Sweeps a wave of bitter sadness,
As I think of that low manger where the Magi
 bent the knee;
And remorse comes o’er me stealing,
As I seem to see them kneeling;
For I think of how I slight Him:—that’s what
 Christmas means to me.

And to-day my heart is grieving
That so long I've been deceiving;
For I've not believed Him truly,—else the "signs"
 had followed me.
Though He called, I did not hear it,
Worshipped not in Truth and Spirit,
Comprehended not His mission:—that's what
 Christmas means to me.

And the pealing bells are bringing
 Throngs of mem'ries, fleetly winging,
And they speak of how He showed me that from
 death I might be free;
But I've missed the truth He taught me,
And refused the gift He brought me
Of Eternal Life triumphant:—that's what Christ-
 mas means to me.

So on this glad Christmas morning,
When God's glory seems adorning
All of earth with peace and gladness, from the
 mountains to the sea;
I uplift mine eyes with pleading
That I may discern His leading,—
Till from Bethlehem to Olivet, His life means
 Life for me.

Hark! I hear the angels singing:
All the air with joy is ringing,
For to-day the Christ-child liveth:—in my heart
He's born again;
And before the manger lowly,
I behold a vision holy
Of the blessed truth of Christmas,—“Peace on
earth, good will to men.”

MY PRAYER

OH Lord, I pray that I may ever know
That Love is All;
That in the darkness Thou hast given me Light,—
Lest I may fall.

And may I claim the strength Thou offerest me
To meet each day,
And trust my all to Thee, nor ask to see
My future way.

Lord, Thou dost know and fill my every need
Before I ask:
So grant me patience to perform aright
Each daily task.

And may I follow through the darkest night
My bright ideal,
And cast away the worthless things of earth,
Keeping the real.

I pray for wisdom, Lord, that I may choose
The better part,
And with a cup of Life's pure water bless
Each thirsting heart.

Through all the way may I have grace to show
A joyous face,
And, spreading sunshine, help to brighten each
Unlovely place.

Teach me to know that perfect peace is reached
Alone through Love,
And that my heaven is instant,—here on earth,
Not far above.

So may I radiate, each day, the Light
That Thou hast given,
And, by reflecting Love divine, in truth
Raise earth to Heaven.

MY DUTY

WHATE'ER of love that lies within to-day,—
And that is all.

Whatever kindly word that I may say,—
For Love is All:

To ask my heart the loving way before
Whate'er I do,
And to my faith, and to my God, to be
Forever true.

To kindly think and softly speak,—yet with
A heart sincere;

To keep unbroken silence when a word
May cause a tear;

To look for beauty everywhere; to see
The good in men;

To love and serve e'en when no love seems giv'n
To me again.

However dark my way, to scatter smiles
That bless and cheer ;
To temper strength with tenderness, and strive
To bring Heaven near.
Not for myself to seek for gain,—but so
To live and love,
That I may help to lift another's heart
To look above.

MY GOAL

To be strong,—that I may lift a
fainting brother ;
To be glad and smile,—that I may
cheer some heart ;
To be wise,—that I may guide the
wayworn wanderer ;
To be pure,—that I may gain the
better part.

To be brave,—that I may fight and
help to conquer ;
To be ever-loving,—that I may
forgive ;
To be rich in Heaven's treasure,
Life eternal,—
That giving, I may teach some
heart to live.

THE CYCLE

(An acrostic.)

AUTUMN

A far in the past, man lost
sight of his own,
U nmindful that God doeth
well ;
T hen, closing his eyes to
omnipotent Good,
U nheeded the Spirit leaves
fell :
M an stood forth unclothed,—Life,
his birthright, seemed flown ;
N e'er heeding God's pleading,
“Come back to your own !”

WINTER

W ith swirling of snow winter
 swept o'er the earth;
I ce-bound, man God's power
 ceased to feel.
N ight-birds of the forest, as
 onward they flew,
T riumphantly cried, "Death is
 real!"
E ach breath of the tempest
 seemed sadly to moan,
"R ash man in his blindness hath
 turned from his own!"

SPRING

S pring cometh at last! Death is
 vanquished; man lives!
P roclaim the glad tidings to
 all!
R ejoice! for the sun of Truth
 shineth with power,
I n Love's name all fetters
 shall fall.
N ight waneth! The storm-clouds
 of error have flown;
G ive thanks! Man awakens: he
 claimeth his own.

SUMMER

Spr ing blossoms to summer ; the
joy-birds all sing ;

U nknown now is death and
decay.

M an steps forth anew, with
righteousness clothed,

M aintaining his birthright for
aye.

E ternal Life triumphs, Love
reigneth alone !

R ejoice ! for God's man hath
come back to his own.

EBB-TIDE

ONLY a waste of wet and gleaming sands,—
As waves receding flow,
Turning away from earth to seek the sea
Where cooling breezes blow :
Just for a time they left the ocean's tide,
And here, foam-crested, beat upon the shore ;
Now back to the unmeasured deep they roll,—
Safe home forevermore.

Only a waste of empty, dreary years,—
As waves of life run out,
Turning away from finite aims to God,
To perfect trust from doubt :
For just a moment's breath they lapped earth's
shore ;
But now the ebbing tide, bereft of foam,
Unto the boundless sea of Love divine,
Has brought them safely home.

THE OTHER ROOM

HE is not gone beyond thy ken,
 Into the gloom ;
Thy dear one lives in Life divine,—
 Not in the tomb,
And just passed through the door into
 The Other Room.

And through the seeming darkness shines
 A gleaming ray :—
Whate'er was thine is still thine own,
 And lives for aye :
Just in the Other Room he dwells,—
 Not far away.

He is not dead ; so dry thy tears
 And cease to pine :
The Other Room is just beyond,
 And he is thine :
Give thanks to God ;—there is no death
 In Life divine !

PROGRESSION

WHEN the summer flow'rs have vanished,
Do we seek within the earth
For the tiny seedlet planted
Ere the blossom came to birth?

When the singing birds have left us,—
Stilled the notes we loved so well,—
Do we seek them in the fragments
Of the old, deserted shell?

And the goal of every streamlet
Is the ocean's boundless wave;
Do we then seek its fulfilment
In the distant mountain cave?

So whene'er a loved one passes
From the earth-seed and the gloom,
To the Light of Life eternal;
Seek we not within the tomb.

For the cherished flow'rs are blooming
Where the sun forever shines ;
And the birds are sweetly singing
In the balmy southern climes ;

While the brook with rapture plunges
In the wide, unfathomed sea ;
And our loved ones reach perfection,
Clothed with Immortality.

FULFILMENT

When all my cherished dreams
 have reached fulfilment,
And each close-folded bud is
 fully blown;
When spring has ripened into
 crowning summer,
And I at last have come into
 mine own :

Then shall I understand why
 life denied me
Its riches for so long ;—for
 I shall know
That both my hands were full
 of tawdry baubles,
And blindly I refused to let
 them go.

The while I deemed the blighted
bud so precious
That at the thought of parting,
tears would start,
For me no perfect blossom e'er
uncovered
The secret sweetness of its
perfumed heart.

While clinging to the flesh and
finite pleasures,
With anxious thought that feared
and mourned their loss,
I gained no treasures from the
wealth of Spirit;
For I was overburdened with
earth's dross.

So some day I shall know that
life seemed bitter,
My prayers were long unanswered,
progress slow,
Because my hands were filled
with worthless pebbles,
And I was, oh, so loath to let
them go.

COMPENSATIONS

STAR of Heaven, that shines with purest lustre,
I would bid thee ever with me stay;
Yet I know that thou must fade and vanish,
Ere the dawn shall bring the golden day.

Snowflake pure and spotless, I would keep thee!
To my heart sweet rapture thou dost bring;
Yet the fervid sun must melt thy crystal,
Ere we feel the gentle breath of Spring.

Dainty rosebud, how I love thy beauty,
Nestling here within my shady bower!
Still I know thou too must change in passing,
Ere we greet the perfect full-blown flower.

So the golden visions of our childhood,
And the rosy dreamings of our youth,
Must unfold to truer understanding,
Ere we reach life's fuller, higher truth.

Earthly pleasures that we hold so dearly,
Pall before eternal joy is given;
And our hearts must turn from flesh to Spirit,
Ere we gain the perfect peace of Heaven.

HEROISM

HE marched not to beating of drums,
Heard no bugle's clear call;
He fought not to stirring huzzas,
But alone:—that was all.
He pressed toward the light that he knew,
Bravely doing his best:
E'en his friends met his effort with sneers,
Yet he stood to the test.

He smiled,—with an ache in his heart;—
'Tis not easy to do;
And the world, as it glanced at his face,
Never guessed, never knew:
Yet at night when no eye might behold,
And the heedless throng slept,
Alone with his heart racked with grief,—
Never doubt that he wept.

It is easy to strive for a prize
While the multitude cheers;
But to steadfastly live for your faith,
And to smile at their jeers,—
That is hard:—yet he held to the truth,
Winning praises from none.
In the battle of life that he waged,
Don't you think that he won?

PATIENCE

I WALKED 'midst the flowers at twilight,
And, wearied with restless thought,
There stole to my heart with their fragrance,
The lesson of patience they taught.

Each bud is a promise of glory,
Each flow'r is that promise fulfilled;
And in its own time, as appointed,
It blooms as the Father hath willed.

And till the bud bursts to unfolding,
Its hour of fulfilment drawn nigh,
No hand may press open the petals,
Or lo, it will wither and die.

So force not the plant in its blooming,
Else, blighted, it fadeth away;
But wait, and though long be thy vigil,
The blossom will crown it some day.

For not every flow'r blooms in springtime,
But some when the summer is past;
And so to each one of God's children
The crown of Life cometh at last.

RECTIFICATION

“THY name?” said a voice to the maiden,
Who raised her proud, laurel-wreathed head.
“Success!” came the clear, ringing answer;
But sadly the Shining One said:—

“Perhaps ’twas thy name in the earth-land;
Yet here where the first shall be last,
I read on thy forehead but ‘Failure’:—
We value not here what thou hast.

“The plaudits of earth are deceiving;
Thy crown is of dead, crumbling flow’rs;—
Thou hast striven with misguided purpose,
And wasted thy life’s precious hours.”

Then turning to one who stood near her,—
No wreath crowned her lowly-bowed head,—
He tenderly questioned, “And thy name?”
“Oh, I’m only ‘Failure,’ ” she said.

“I’ve gained no world-fame and no riches ;
I’ve sought not the treasures of earth,
But labored for knowledge of Spirit,
And men called my life of no worth.”

“Nay, little one, here we see clearly :
A new name to thee hath been given :
I crown thee ‘Success,’—for ’tis written,—
Earth’s last shall be first here in Heaven.”

CASTAWAYS

A ROSE! what, that poor faded thing,
All withered, torn, and crushed?
Ah, yes, 'twas wrought in beauty rare,
Till trampled in the dust.

It raised its heart all fresh with dew,
To greet the new-born day;
When one there came who paused and plucked,—
Then lightly cast away.

A man! what, that poor bruised thing,
All torn by fear and lust?
Ah, yes,—in God's own image made;
But groveling in the dust.

The rose can ne'er regain its bloom;
But man, if he but see,
May be what God, in perfect Love,
Intendeth him to be.

THOUGHTS

EACH little thought of love you send
 Out in to-day,
Will speed on fleet and airy wings,
 Along life's way,
To seek another thought of love;
 And, finding there,
Will bring it back unto your heart,—
 An answered prayer.

Each little thought of doubt and fear
 Sent out, will find
The thing you fear;—for every thought
 Brings back its kind.
The hate you give will come to you
 With hate again,
And every tear of grief return
 In bitter pain.

And so your life is sad or gay,
 By what you give
Of care or joy in every day;—
 'Tis thus we live:
So guard your thoughts and make them fair,
 And good, and true;
And they will bring their blessings rare,
 Back home to you.

A SONG OF JOY

I'M glad for every flower that grows,
From clover bloom to gorgeous rose ;
 For every bird that soareth high
 On airy wings up toward the sky ;
And for each gentle breeze that blows.

I'm glad for every sunset bright
Which bathes the earth in golden light ;
 For twilight's dusky purple hue ;
 And silv'ry moonbeams sifting through
The lacey leaves in flecks of white.

I'm glad for fields and babbling rills ;
For forest glades and wooded hills ;
 For misty vales, and rivers wide ;
 And for the ocean's boundless tide,
Whose mighty voice my being thrills.

I'm thankful for the budding spring,
For every fresh and growing thing;
For summer's wealth of blooming flow'rs,
Its peaceful nights and sunny hours,
With all the rapture that they bring.

I'm thankful for the garnered grain,
For ripened fruits, and autumn rain,
And flaming woodlands red and gold;
For winter's crisp and bracing cold,
And snowflakes without spot or stain.

I'm glad for sun, and stars, and dew;
For friendship tried and proven true;
For time to serve and love to give
To every creature that doth live;
And for the good that I may do.

I'm glad for life, and hope, and love;
For peace, and light to look above;
For strength to work, and grace to pray;
And glad for every new-born day
Which brings me proof that God is Love.

Yet 'mid these blessings freely mine,
I thank Him that my heart doth pine
 To look beyond all human bliss
 Unto a world more fair than this,
And turns from earth to the divine.

So for the gifts that God hath given,
I praise Him most that I am driven
 To seek the higher, nobler things
 Of Spirit, and to mount on wings
Unto the richer joys of Heaven.

MY CASTLE

I'M building a wonderful castle,—
Laying it stone upon stone,—
And moment by moment I labor ;
For lo, I must build it alone.

At times I am weary and saddened,
And put in a stone of Despair ;
While often I'm angry and fretful,
And build with the pebbles of Care.

Thus here and there, all through my castle,
Will show imperfections of Sin,
Unless I keep vigil in building,
That no faulty stone enters in.

For all that is placed there remaineth
A part of this structure of mine ;
And so must I use blocks of Kindness,
And lay them in Mercy divine ;

Selecting each stone for its beauty,—
Unselfishness, Patience, and Love,—
Then faithfully follow the Pattern
The Architect sent from above.

And when a day, bright in its dawning,
Beholdeth my castle complete,
I'll go to the great Master Builder
And lay it, ashamed, at His feet.

Then will He accept or reject it?
Perchance I have labored in vain;
For I must tear down what is faulty,
And patiently build it again.

Perhaps 'twill be found weak, disfigured,
When God's perfect plan is unrolled;
Defective,—and then is my castle
Unfit for the City of Gold.

Until it attaineth His standard,—
Though ages unnumbered may roll,—
'Twill still be discarded as worthless;
So may it be perfect, and whole.

Dear Master, I'm longing for wisdom,
And strength for the task I've begun,
That when Thou shalt call for my castle,
I'll gain Thine approval, "Well done!"

THE MOUNTAINS OF PEACE

ONCE I wandered in the valley,
By a troubled stream,
Looking ever toward the mountains,—
Glorious, serene ;
And the longing left me never,
To forsake my restless river,
For the heights, where Peace doth ever
Hold its sway supreme.

Yet they seemed so far, so misty,
To my tear-dimmed eyes,
And the way so steep and toilsome
Where their beauty lies ;
That I'd oft be vainly sighing
For the wings of Faith—that, flying,
I might reach them, distant lying
'Gainst the sunset skies.

Peaceful were their purple shadows,
And their slopes were fair,
While the river murmured ever
Of unrest and care;
Yet my hope grew ever dearer,
And my earth-bound vision clearer,
Till the Hills of Peace drew nearer,
With their treasures rare.

Then the haze that veiled their presence
And their promise sweet,
Vanished,—as when mists of morning
With the sunlight meet;
For at last I woke from dreaming,
And the mountains, distant seeming,
With the light of Peace were gleaming,—
At my very feet.

BENEATH THE LEAVES

I WANDERED through a lonely wood,
 Long years ago ;
No flowers bloomed beside my path,
 The clouds hung low :

And heartsick, faint, I struggled on
 For weary miles,
While last year's leaves around me lay
 In dreary piles.

At last, as worn and almost spent
 With grief and care,
I pushed away the mouldering leaves
 That gathered there ;

And, searching 'neath them as they lay
 Just at my feet,
I found a perfect woodland flower,
 Divinely sweet.

And so, beneath my broken hopes,
 In life's dark hour,
I seek the blessing, as I sought
 The woodland flower;

For, having learned though rough the way
 And deep the gloom,
Still underneath the withered leaves
 The flowers bloom,

I now have faith to ever know,—
 Though naught I see,—
That God hath placed in every path
 A flower for me.

THE LAND OF TRUE SUCCESS

THE Land of True Success that I
 would seek,
Is reached not by the Road of
 Earthly Power :
I fain would tread some simple,
 grass-grown path,
Where often I may pause to pluck
 a flower.

The crowded road leads on,—but
 not to Peace ;
Its hurrying thousands fix on
 earth their eyes :
For me, the silence of some
 woodland path,
With glimpses here and there of
 Paradise.

Upon the road the strongest
 crush the weak,
Then struggle on in search of
 earthly gold :
But give to me a path where
 brothers meet,—
Where all shall seek in Love
 a wealth untold.

The countless throngs press on
 with eager feet,
To reach a worthless prize that
 fades away ;
Yet I would seek to understand
 life's truth,
And lift my brother fallen by
 the way.

Oh, may my treasure be of Heaven,—
 not earth ;
And when the farthest guide-post
 has been passed,
I'll find, though I have naught
 of wealth or fame,
The Land of True Success is mine
 at last.

THE VALE OF SEEMING

IN the Vale of Seeming,
Where the clouds hang low,
Men and women wander,
Dreaming as they go.

Groping through the darkness,
Plucking weeds of care;—
While upon the hilltops
Bloom the flowers fair.

Gathering worthless pebbles,
In their sleep profound;—
While upon the mountains
Priceless gems abound.

By dense mists enshrouded,
There the sun ne'er gleams;—
Here, above the storm-clouds,
Light Eternal streams.

There the sound of weeping;—
Here an anthem swells:
On the Hills of Glory
Peace Eternal dwells.

There the phantom reaper
Gathers in his grains;—
On the Mount of Spirit
Life Eternal reigns.

And they blindly murmur
As in dreams they weep,
“Yet a little slumber,
Yet a little sleep.”

Will they ne'er awaken,
Never leave the Vale?
Lo, the answer cometh,
“Love will never fail.”

I would wake them now, Lord,
Soon 'twill be too late.
Anxiously I listen,—
Lo, the answer, “Wait!”

They will cease from dreaming
And unclosetheir eyes,
When, of sleep aweary,
They shall long to rise.

Then by patient climbing,
Seeking Love's release,
Leave the Vale of Seeming,
Reach the Hills of Peace.

UNANSWERED

I said, "Oh little lad, with
 faith unbounded,
I pray thou'll ever keep thy
 joyous heart,
And thy calm trust that knows
 no thought of evil,
Nor feels its smart:
May life seem just as bright
 to thee at evening,
As at its dawn,—thy earthly
 cares as few;
And may thou keep thyself as
 pure and spotless!"
He said, "Did you?"

“May naught e’er dim thy knowledge
 of God’s goodness,
The peace that shines within
 thy trusting eyes;
And as thou’rt free from fear,
 keep thou forever,—
 Lest doubts arise:
Then open not thine heart to
 lies that darken,
But, shutting out whatever is
 untrue,
Seek only for the things that
 are eternal!”
He said, “Did you?”

THE RIVER OF LIFE

“And a little child shall lead them.”—Isa. 11 : 6.

DOWN to the river's brink a
maiden came,
And scanned with wistful eyes
the glowing west,
Where, just beyond the placid,
flowing tide,
There lay a city in a land
of rest.

Its palaces gleamed white and
wondrous fair,
And all its streets were paved
with shining gold ;
Its gates were pearl, its walls
of jewels rare,
While through its midst a crystal
river rolled.

It had no need of moon to shine
by night,
Nor golden sun to lighten it
by day ;
No death was there, nor sorrow,
neither pain,
For God himself had wiped all
tears away.

Yet still the river gently
rolled between ;
And as she pondered how to
cross its tide,
That she might reach the harbor
just beyond,
She saw a boatman at the
river's side.

"What is yon city fair?" the
maiden asked.
"'Tis Heaven," the boatman said,
"the land of peace ;
The city of your hopes and fond
desires,
Where all earth's woes and
tribulations cease."

“Oh, tell me how to reach this
wished-for land:
I fain would hasten to its
peaceful rest.”
“I’ll be your guide,” he said:
“my boat is strong:
Who sails with me shall be
forever blest.”

Then as she turned to follow
where he led,
A little child, with arms
outstretched, stood near,
And in a silv’ry voice cried
out, “Oh, stay!
Go not with him! This boatman’s
name is Fear.

“Come, follow me! See, yonder
is my bark!
I’ll guide you safely to that
Heavenly Home.
My name is Truth: in Spirit I
abide.”
And in a voice of love, she
pleaded, “Come.”

The maiden looked, and gently
 smiled to see
A tiny shallop dancing on the
 wave ;
Then, laughing lightly, passed
 the little child,
And hurried on with buoyant
 heart and brave.

“Good sir, I fain would hasten
 to embark :
The journey is not long, the
 river calm,—
Yet I would make the harbor ere
 ’tis dark,
For even now, methinks, I fear
 some harm.”

“No need of haste, fair maid, the
 stream is wide ;
Your journey will consume long,
 weary years ;
The way is dark and fraught with
 dangers dread,
With countless monsters, and with
 nameless fears.

“This river is the River of your
Life;
And just before you reach that
distant shore,
The seething whirlpool Death must
swallow you,
And you will sink,—perhaps to
rise no more.”

“What! Must I pass through horrors
all the way,
To perish at the last?” the maiden
cried.

“Yes,” answered he, “all who have
reached that goal
Have greatly suffered, and at last
have died.”

“Is there no way to pass this
whirlpool by?
And must I die to reach that city
fair?
How am I sure that even then I’ll
find,
When I have suffered all, that I
am there?”

“You cannot tell what lies
beyond,” he said,
“Nor what will happen after
Death’s cold wave
Envelopes you ; but blindly,
knowing naught,
Must pass through this dark
whirlpool of the Grave.

The maiden’s face which once
had glowed with joy,
Was now o’erclouded with a dire
dismay :
And, with a sigh, she grasped
the laboring oars,
And at the boatman’s bidding,
pulled away.

“Where is the sun which lately
seemed to shine ?
Dark, lowering clouds obscure
its golden light :
Whence come these angry, foam-
capped waves ?” she cried :
“Why fades the Heavenly City
from my sight ?”

"'Tis ever thus with mortals,"
he replied;

"When starting out, the way seems
bright and fair;

But soon the land which seemed
not far away,

Has fainter grown, till 'tis no
longer there.

"See yonder towering wave, yon
jutting rock!

The one is Envy, and the other,
Strife.

These monsters grim are Sickness,
Pain, and Sin:

With these you needs must struggle
all your life."

The maiden looked, and saw them
as he said:

The boat rocked wildly in the
seething gale.

"I can no farther go!" at last
she cried;

"My hope is gone; my strength
begins to fail.

“The way is dark, oh boatman!
dark and drear;
My heart is heavy, and my soul
oppressed.”
Hark! Comes a soft, sweet whisper
to her ear;—
“Come unto Me, and I will give
you rest.”

Then lo, she sees the little
child once more,
And, as she looks, a star shines
through the night.
“The star! Oh maiden, see! The
Star of Hope!
Come, leave your Fear! Truth
ever guides aright.”

Then waiting not for e'en one
parting word,
She leaps from out her tempest-
battered bark,
And leaving Fear behind her in
the gloom,
She sees him vanish in the
gath'ring dark.

Truth stands before her speaking
soft and low,
“I must remove your heavy veil,
oh maid;—
'Tis called the Veil of Mortal
Sense, you know;—
When once 'tis gone, you ne'er
can be afraid.

And with a gentle hand, she lifts
its folds;
And then the maiden, blinded once
by Fear,
Beholds the River Life, serene
and calm,
And Heaven, the blessed city,
even here.

“Where are the waves that lately
seemed so wild?
Where are the monsters that
beset my way?”
“They were but conjured phantoms,”
said the child,
“Seen through your veil, which I,
Truth, took away.”

“But what of Death? Is that too
but a dream?

Or must I still be swallowed by
its wave?”

“Dear maid, the Shining One who
went before,
Has vanquished e’en the terror
of the Grave.

“All eyes are blinded by this
veil of Sense,
Till He, the Christ, doth bid
them banish Fear:
He shows that God is Love, and
sends but good;
And dwelleth not in distant
skies, but here.

“The sun shone just as brightly
overhead;
Your veil caused seeming clouds
to gather near;
The river flowed as calmly,
smoothly on,
Though threat’ning rocks and
waves seemed to appear.

“And so the Heaven of your
 fondest dreams
Is not a city distant, far
 apart;
But when through Spirit you
 have understood,
You find its kingdom is within
 your heart.”

DEC 6 1910

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